

MAY: Well welcome and thank you for joining us for today's event hosted by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. I'm Cliff May. I'm FDD's founder and president.

Now, we billed this, as you may know, as a fireside chat, so you know, if you're wondering where the fire is, look outside.

(LAUGHTER)

MAY: Thank you, Canada. Thank you, Justin Trudeau. OK, no, that's a different conversation.

We're pleased to have you here, some in person, some tuning in live for this conversation with Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Jessica Lewis to discuss U.S. security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

The People's Republic of China is undertaking a massive military buildup and wielding its growing might more aggressively, including in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. At the same time, Beijing is deepening its security cooperation -- that's kind of a euphemism, I think, but we'll leave it there -- with Moscow and Tehran. It's long been FDD's conviction that to deter aggression in regions vital to American national interests, we, Washington, the U.S. needs capable, forward-positioned military forces. It's a controversial position. It's our position. We'll discuss it, I'm sure.

The U.S. also needs defense partners with cutting-edge capabilities, partners who can operate effectively in coordination with American forces and help carry the security burden.

This conversation will be moderated by Bradley Bowman, senior director of FDD's Center on Military Power -- Military and Political Power. Assistant Secretary Lewis will discuss the Biden administration's ongoing security cooperation efforts, drawing on her recent visit to the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. That sounds like fun. Shangri-La.

LEWIS: Triple-I, triple-S.

MAY: OK, yeah, I...

LEWIS: Or double-I, double-S. Sorry.

MAY: Not ISIS, so it--.

LEWIS: So yeah -- no. Yeah.

MAY: Assistant Secretary Lewis has served in numerous and impressive and important roles, including Democratic staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, senior national security advisor and foreign policy advisor to Senate Majority and one-time-Minority Leader Harry Reid and senior foreign policy advisor to Senator Robert Menendez. The secretary received an MPA from Harvard University and MAT from Johns Hopkins University and a BA from Haverford College.

Before we dive in, just a few words about FDD. Most of you know, but for more than 20 years, to my great astonishment, FDD has operated as a fiercely independent, nonpartisan research institute exclusively focused on national security and foreign policy. As a point of pride and a point of principle, we do not accept foreign funding. We never have.

We never will. So for more on our work, please do visit our website for lots of good information, analysis, opinions there. FDD.org. Follow us on Twitter, @FDD. And that's enough from me, for now.

Brad, over to you.

BOWMAN: Great. Thank you, Cliff, so much, and thanks to everyone for coming and tuning in. Thanks to you for coming. I can't imagine how full your inbox must be, and -- and it's -- a warm welcome to FDD and our Center on Military and Political Power.

And I really enjoyed working with you in the Senate several years back. Time flies, but I -- I just found you to be such a -- a capable leader and -- in the Senate; enjoyed working with you very much, and I'm glad, honestly, that someone like you's in this important position now, and thank you for coming, and I'm really excited to have this conversation with you.

So here's -- for the audience here, here's the plan. We're going to -- we're going to chat for a while, the two of us, and then I'm going to invite you all into the conversation to ask questions because -- I'm sure you'll think of some great questions that I haven't thought of. As usual, I have far more than I'll have time to ask. You know, as an over-ambitious former military officer may, I guess, over-prepared, but let's just jump right in, if that's all right. But again, welcome to FDD.

LEWIS: Well, first of all, thank you, Brad, for hosting. Thank you for FDD not just for hosting me here today, but for really, the many, many years of great work that is done here, and I've known the organization and relied on the expertise for -- long before this conversation today.

I also really want to take a minute and thank Brad. You know, I think people sometimes think the Hill is just a place full of people arguing with each other, but the real truth is, is that we actually -- and I think particularly on the Foreign Relations Committee, do -- when I was there, and we worked together on many of the key issues of the time. We worked on Yemen issues, and Middle East issues, and a whole host of things, and we got, I think, some very important things done together. And I want to thank you and your former boss. But you should know that these kinds of relationships are really important but they actually happen more often than you might know from the outside.

But I am happy to be here. We relied on your expertise when I was staff director, and your insights, and I've continued to do so in my new job.

So let me take just a few minutes at the very top and talk -- I want to talk a little bit about what the Bureau of Political Military Affairs is -- I've learned it's always best for me to start there -- and then talk a little bit about the Indo-Pacific itself, and what we're doing in the Indo-Pacific.

So the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs was -- at its essence, does the really hard work of putting the foreign policy lens on all of the cross-cutting work that we do in the defense space. And I think that is -- if you look at sort of the law that governed all of our arms transfers, which is what people sort of generally know us for, we manage about, depending on the year, \$135 billion to \$175 billion in arms transfers. That happens both on the foreign commercial sales side, which is our -- I'm sorry, the direct commercial sales side, which is our -- when a company sells to a government or a country, or on the foreign military sales side, which is the government-to-government sales.

So the law that undergirds all of that work basically says that we need to take and decided to put the authorities for these arms transfers in the State Department so that we did have a foreign policy lens, so that we're asking the question, you know, does making this sale, does doing this arms transfer, is that serving the foreign policy interests of the United States? And happy to go into more of that if helpful.

But in addition to that work, the bureau also does some really other -- interesting other things. We are in charge of all of the demining work that the United States does around the world and the work we do on unexploded ordnance. Incredibly important. We are the largest supporter of demining efforts around the world. So that's from Vietnam, a lot to Ukraine, Afghanistan. You can imagine hugely needed work.

We're also in charge of negotiating all of our security cooperation agreements and other agreements that underpin all of our security relationships around the world. That is big work that needs to be done. We're also -- we also manage a whole host of programs that allow us to work and train other militaries -- so our peacekeeping operations, training, we manage our IMET program, where foreign officers come and train in the United States, and we also have a great program where we place advisors into ministries of defense.

And I'm only touching on part of the work that we do but it's really an extraordinary place to work and I just need to take a minute here -- for those of you who have interacted with PM, you already know this -- but the level of expertise in this bureau is truly extraordinary. I walked into a really well-functioning, well-run bureau with people who are -- there because of the mission but bring the technical expertise.

So now let me turn to the -- the topic of today. So I think -- and you've probably heard the Secretary of Defense and State talk about this -- that, you know, the -- the question of the history of the 21st Century will be defined in the Indo-Pacific, and we are looking to implement the Indo-Pacific Strategy that we have put in place, so that the U.S. can be at the leading edge of playing a pivotal role in how that works.

Let me tell you a little bit specifically about what we are doing. So in the -- in the Indo-Pacific, last year, we've implemented \$13 billion in foreign military sales in the region. We have about currently \$30 billion in active FMS cases with South Korea, another \$20 billion in active cases with Japan.

I couldn't talk about the Indo-Pacific without talking about AUKUS, which is, I think as all of you know, a historic agreement that is really increasing our defense trade cooperation with two of our closest allies, and happy to talk more about AUKUS. It's going to modernize these longstanding alliances, and really, I think we see this as visionary in terms of meeting the challenges I started with on the 21st century.

When it comes to -- defense cooperation agreements, I want to point out one that we just recently have completed negotiating, which is the agreement with the PNG, with Papua New Guinea, and also, we have enhanced agreements with the Philippines, and this both increases U.S. military access and our security cooperation.

Let me take a second to talk about China, which I know ...

BOWMAN: Sure, yeah, we'll jump in, yeah --.

LEWIS: ... on everybody's minds. Look, I think, as you've seen with the Secretary's trip, we believe that we need to responsibly manage the U.S.-China relationship. I need to make it clear, when it comes to Taiwan, our One China Strategy

has not changed. We still believe that we have to resolve cross-strait differences peacefully and we -- at the same time, as has been true for many years, we're laser-focused on helping Taiwan maintain its self-defense capabilities.

Last year, we notified 13 foreign military sales cases to Taiwan. That is the largest number we've notified in one year since, I think, the early '90s. And happy to talk a lot more about Taiwan but just wanted to kind of give some brief remarks and then turn it over to you.

BOWMAN: No -- well, thank you. No, that's a -- those are -- are wonderful and are really a -- a great scene setter. You hit on it a little bit there but one of the questions I always like to ask, whether it's an event or in podcast, for -- you know, we do this for a living full time, right, for -- you know, but for folks tuning in, you know, outside the Beltway or busy with their lives, paying the mortgage, raising the kids, why do we care -- why should the average American care about helping these foreign militaries? How do we benefit with our security cooperation with other countries?

LEWIS: I think it's a really great question. I'm actually glad you asked it cause I think we need to talk about it more. I mean, this goes to the core of what I actually think the Biden administration has been about when it comes to foreign policy, which is really building our alliances -- and I think -- and our partnerships with other countries, and that is because of course we believe in them but we actually literally believe we are stronger when our partners and allies are stronger, and we also believe that that means our partners and allies are out there going to be able to invest in and do the work along with us, and I think that is at the core of defense trade.

So when you look at security cooperation and defense trade, which are slightly different things -- to be super technical about it but just to sort of stay in the general space -- when we provide a weapons system to a country through our foreign military sales, we do something which is called -- we call it the total package approach.

That means that not only do we say this is the weapon, but we train you on how to use it, we train you on how to maintain and sustain it. I've never maintained and sustained, like, an F-16, but you should know that is not a small endeavor. It takes real expertise, it takes a long time to learn how to do, and because we make the best military equipment in the world our equipment lasts for a long time. And so, it's in my view it's not just a transfer of a plane. It is part of creating a relationship between our militaries and theirs.

And I think for the American people we are stronger at home when our allies and partners are stronger abroad. In the simplest terms when they can deal with a problem, whether that's terrorism, or piracy, or the long list of things, themselves, that helps our national security. And it also means that we don't have to come in on the back end and solve problems. So that's my view on why we do this.

BOWMAN: Really, really well said. And in my view -- I agree with you and my view if -- welcome you to push back, agree or disagree, is that when we have allies and partners who are closer to problems, who have common interests, who are looking to work with us then it's -- it's not charity to help them, right, it's a wise investment because you make them more capable. You help them keep small problems from getting bigger. And should deterrence fail they're going to be more effective operating with our forces if they have the best training and the best equipment in the world. So these are smart investments from my perspective.

LEWIS: And I think you picked up on a word that I think actually is really key. I -- they are investments. And I think that is very much how we see them. And you know, it's really interesting to me, one of the things that I've seen to take it out of the arms sales context and look at the military training.

For example, often and I meet with heads of militaries and -- all over the world and I would say 90 percent of the time when I sit down at the table and I'm talking to a general or an admiral or whoever maybe, he or she, will say to me you know, I was in your IMET program...

BOWMAN: Yes, yes.

LEWIS: ... 20 years ago and by the way I'm really good friends with so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so, and we still stay in touch. And we talk about these kinds of issues to this day. And so those kinds of investments I think are also -- those are human investments as well...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... so critical and important. And I would add that -- and then I'll let you move on to your next question...

BOWMAN: Yes, no, it's great.

LEWIS: I thought a lot about this. I actually think that when we have these relationships, if you look at the question of do we want democracy or autocracy to win in the world, which you know, I firmly believe the answer is democracy. You do too.

BOWMAN: I do.

LEWIS: It's in your...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... it's literally...

BOWMAN: It's in our name.

LEWIS: ... the name of your organization...

BOWMAN: We are not neutral on that question...

LEWIS: Neither am I.

I think you know, strong relationships with militaries, militaries that have good security sector governance, that run well that, have transparency, all of those kinds of things which are built through our security cooperation. I actually believe that that is in the interest of the democracy, and helps strengthen the democracy in those countries.

Now conversely bad security sector governance can influence...

BOWMAN: Exactly.

LEWIS: ... in the other way. And I -- I'm not trying to be hyperbolic and say that U.S. security cooperation solves all problems, but I do think it contributes to these sort of core issues which matter very much to our own national security and our own national security interests.

BOWMAN: Well you and I could talk for a couple of hours about this. I'm...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... really -- just a couple, two foot stomps and then I'll move on here. Just you know, often in D.C. in my experience, and I'm eager to hear from you based on your experience, when we were talking about an arms sale, people are focused on, hey this this or that company, this or that money, and to me that you know, that's fine. Companies are going to do what companies do but when you sell a major system to an ally or partner, there are all kinds of benefits to the U.S. national interest and that lasts often for two or three decades.

If they buy a major aircraft or major air defense system from us, that means as you said they're going to be working with Americans in that country. It's going to be helping interoperability. It's going to have all kinds of often intangible benefits for the American interests that go way beyond the bottom line for some defense company.

LEWIS: May I bring this back to something...

BOWMAN: Please.

LEWIS: ... that I think...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... is directly relevant to the topic of the Indo-Pacific and I -- well not just...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... to China but to Russia.

So the United States of America currently is the largest arms exporter in the world. We export 40 -- 41 percent of the world's arms. That is up. This is a 10-year average because we have to do it -- my number crunchers tell me this is the right number to use. So that -- and that number is up.

Russia has -- and these are all public numbers. Russia has drop -- Russia has dropped from second to third in the world. And then we have you know France and Italy, and ROK, and Israel and China.

So, you know, clearly I think because our Defense Industrial Base really does make the defense -- our best defense articles in the world, people buy them. They also want the relationship with the United States. But I do think we need to be mindful as we look into this space, as we look into competition.

We have other countries like China and Russia who will offer weapons and with you know no strings attached...

BOWMAN: Cheaper, quicker...

LEWIS: ... Right.

BOWMAN: ... no questions asked. You can use it to kill as many civilians as you want.

LEWIS: Right.

BOWMAN: 'We're not going to hassle you about that...

LEWIS: We're not -- Right. And we don't do that. I think we're right. I actually think the numbers show that we're right. But I think as we look to the future, we need to understand that that kind of competition will increase and that it is part of what we're doing, that is part of our work.

Also one of the things that -- and this is in the Russia-Ukraine context not China...

BOWMAN: Yes. Yes.

LEWIS: ... China but I do think it's relevant here. You know, we are looking at the question as Russia faces many challenges in Ukraine, which we could talk about extensively, I think they're also showing that they're not a reliable defense partner.

And we are hearing from countries -- and I won't go into details here but we're hearing from countries that are looking to diversify their purchases -- not because they're taking a moral stance on the war but because that's literally as they look at the future they see what's happened.

And so I think we have to recognize that that's also a part of the conversation.

BOWMAN: That's great. And you mentioned IMET. I'll just comment...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: And then we'll move on because this is just too good. But I got to move on. Yeah.

IMET, International Military Education [and] Training. The broad name that we use for bringing foreign military officers to the U.S. for all kinds of training at...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... different levels. As a former military officer I was -- I interacted with some foreign military officers and like you said you establish connections early in your career that if you stay in long enough to be a general, admiral, or you know, these people go on to do you know, be presidents of country or you know...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... ambassadors, really pays dividends. And I was doing a -- I was guest hosting an episode of Foreign Policy podcast with General Richardson, the Commander...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... of SOUTH -- SOUTHCOM, who was wonderful. I first met her when she was a Colonel working in the Senate by...

LEWIS: I met her there too.

BOWMAN: ... another Army...

LEWIS: You haven't met her.

BOWMAN: ... Blackhawk pilot. She's...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... she's awesome.

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: But...

LEWIS: She's extraordinary.

BOWMAN: ... we -- she was talking about how active the PRC is in Latin America.

LEWIS: Everywhere. Yes.

BOWMAN: And one of the things they're doing is they're seeing the success of our IMET program and...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... they're copying and pasting it just like the PRC does in so many areas and inviting people from Central and South America to come to China and trying to replicate what we do, understanding the value of it.

So, to the staffers in the room you know, God bless you. You're doing important work from two former staffers. Don't underestimate, unpaid advertisement here, the value of these training programs. That they pay for our interest both in the short and long term sometimes difficult to measure but very, very valuable. So I'll move on.

So let's zoom in on the Indo-Pacific.

LEWIS: He asked.

BOWMAN: So you're at Shangri-La. You I'm sure you had lots of important meetings there with allies and partners...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ...What were your main takeaways from the -- for those you know, we talked about the Shangri-La Dialogue. The Secretary was there.

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: I believe -- yes, and you were...

LEWIS: The Secretary of Defense.

BOWMAN: ... Secretary of Defense Austin...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... was there. What -- just kind of -- what -- big priorities, opportunities, challenges, coming off the Shangri-La from you.

LEWIS: You know, I -- just a couple of things that I think were really striking for me -- and this is my first time attending Shangri-La. I think you know, COVID, and a lot of these kinds of events are really coming back in -- in full force. And I think it was the largest -- somebody told me it was the largest one they'd ever had.

So I was struck by a couple of things. One, and they're interrelated interestingly. I think one is how much interest there is in working closely with the United States. And I had -- when you go to these you don't just have you know, the big dialogue but you get a chance to sit down and talk to people. And it was striking to me.

Now some countries are going to do that in more public ways. Some countries are going to do that in more quiet ways. But I think it was palpable, that reality.

I think the second thing that was very, very interesting to me as you look at the future of the Indo-Pacific from a security perspective, is the leadership role and the ways that countries were interacting with each other. And I mean this in a positive sense.

So, you know, we would see the Philippines talking about issues that are core issues to the Philippines but that also related to others sitting in the room. We would see Singapore, who's obviously the host but who played a leading role on a whole host of issues.

So I was struck both by the deep interest in the United States and working with the U.S. but also how much of that security architecture -- and I don't just mean the literal architecture but the relationships that underpin that are deepening and growing and strengthening.

Obviously the question of the PRC, and I think you know they -- the PRC was there. I think is always an important part of any of these kinds of dialogues. But again I think this forum created a space where everybody could sit down and have those conversations.

BOWMAN: Yeah. That's great.

I want to pivot to foreign military sales which you touched on, which is a key topic. It's been a real area of research here at our Center on Military and Political Power.

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: Me and my friend and colleague Rear Admiral Retired Mark Montgomery have published on this several times. When you were gracious enough to host me in your office, a year or so ago, we talked about some of this.

You know, we all -- everyone and I -- and I reviewed, the hearing your testimony in May...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. And I'd say at least half the questions were some version of, "can we hurry up, please?"

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: And right, you know, and there's good reason for that, right, because we have the 19 billion-dollar, I don't know if that's the current number backlog for Taiwan but these things are easier said than done. And I know that you and all the patriotic people that you lead in the Bureau there are doing a lot to try to fix this.

But you know, just from my perspective and push back however you want, you know, the horrible -- Putin's horrible unprovoked invasion of Ukraine reminds us that it's better to help partners and allies before an invasion, to try to prevent it from happening, than dealing with a conflict that could have been avoided, that's far costlier. And so to me, there's clear lessons from that for Taiwan.

And I know that that the Secretary just issued a Memo on June 13th, featuring six areas of focus, directing the Department to implement the recommendations of their tiger team. The State Department as you highlighted in your testimony has a new 10-point Plan of Action on Foreign Military Sales.

And then just this week, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, Michael McCaul, announced a bipartisan FMS Task Force that will be co-led by Congressman Mike Waltz, Republican of Florida, and Seth Moulton, Democrat of Massachusetts.

So what do you see -- assuming that we all which I know we do agree on the goal to...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... deliver to Taiwan as quickly as possible. And there's a lot of patriotic hardworking people working overtime to make that happen. What do you see as the primary obstacles to getting weapons more quickly to Taiwan, a goal we all share?

LEWIS: Let me take this in two pieces.

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: So let me talk a little bit about what you raised first...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... which is the broader foreign military sales reform process. And then talk a bit specifically about Taiwan because there are interrelated questions.

So, I taught third grade for a while, so just give me, I'm going to do a step back and do a little brief on kind of like I keep joking. It's, you know, how does, how does a weapon become an arm sale? Like, how does a bill become a law? It's like, this is my...

BOWMAN: It's like Schoolhouse Rock.

LEWIS: ...I don't have a song, but I will, someone on my team will take that on. But let me walk you through the process because I do think there are a couple of key things to understand here.

So, the first thing is our defense industrial base fundamentally is designed to serve our own military, our war fighter. And it should be, so that's what they do. Their job every day is to get up and make sure that our war fighter, whomever they are, have what they need to fight the fight that the Pentagon is preparing for, or as the case may be, is in. Export is additional to that, and so I think that is actually key to understanding our foreign military sales system. There are other countries where who, of course, have militaries, but the export piece is more the core source of sort of funding and the way they work. I won't comment on that, but it's a different model.

And our defense industrial base has to work within and on the backbone of the system that all acquisitions go through in the Defense Department. So, how does a weapon become an arm sale? It usually starts with a conversation between our military folks in our embassies and a country's military. There can be a long discussion about kind of, what do you want? How much does it cost?

You have to remember that these are systems that can cost, you know, a Patriot costs a billion dollars. So, people don't just say, hey, I'm going to buy a Patriot today. You have to think through it. Then once that conversation is done, which can take 12 to 18 months or more, then you actually have to write up the very complicated details about why, I mean, about exactly how this is going to work.

And then it becomes a case, and I'm skipping steps here, by the way. Then it becomes a case that comes to the State Department and gets submitted to us. We actually move 90 to 95% of our cases in 24 to 48 hours. Those are the cases you don't hear about. Those are the ones that just move because they are to countries that we have long-standing relationships with. They're not new systems. They move very quickly. They then have to be notified to Congress. I can talk you through the congressional notification. It varies on-

BOWMAN: You've been on both sides of that.

LEWIS: I've been on all sides of that. So, Congress gets to weigh in. We are the only country in the world that I know of where our legislature weighs in. I believe in that. I support that. That's what our law says. And then after that, it comes back to DoD. It gets contracted, which can take up to 18 months. And then once it's on contract, only then is the money

put down, and then does production start. And I'm skipping things, but that is the general process of how this works. And the reasons for each of these.

If you look at the FMS reform that we put out, and the FMS reform that the Defense Department put out, it is looking at all of these pieces. So, let me talk about the State Department piece. And I'm not going to go through all ten recommendations, because then we'd be here all day. But our recommendations fall into a couple of categories. We have a number of things that we want to do at the beginning, so that when we make decisions, we make them earlier and more comprehensively.

So, later down the line, it can move more quickly. So, that includes looking at prioritization, like, where should we be prioritizing our focus? That involves looking at things like, if we're exporting this weapon to one country in a region, should we make the decision that we can export it to all. Right? So, you're sort of trying to cut down on time frames. Then we're doing other things that are more about, like the workforce, like, how do we make sure our SCOs [security cooperation officers], who are trained so that they know the system, so we don't have to do back and forth with them. Right?

Some of them are about working with Congress to see what we can do to improve that process. And then some of it is a whole host of items to look at making things more exportable, looking at something called non program of record, which is long and complicated. But the short version is, it is a way of saying if the Pentagon doesn't, chooses one system but there is another system that might be better for expert purposes. How can we have that be something our allies and partners can buy?

So, anyway, all of that to say, even if we do all of that, the long pole in the tent right now is production timelines. And industry, we've had long conversations with industry. Industry is facing a massive increase in demand from us, from the money we're investing, and from our partners and allies. They also were hit with COVID, supply chain, human resources, like, all the same sets of things. And so, there is a whole effort being done, mostly led at DOD, because they own that, to work on the production timeline challenge.

BOWMAN: That's great. Again, I wish we had more time. There's so much there. No, no, no, no, no. It's a compliment, not a passive, because every one of those things you highlighted, we could drill down on. And you're right that there's so many chefs in the stew if you will. And the production timelines thing, right, you hinted at there, I mean, extraordinary demand right now in the American defense industry.

We turned to the arsenal democracy, and it's like, ooh, it's not quite what we thought it was, and this is not World War II America here. There's not quite the capacity that we had hoped for when we're simultaneously trying to provide Ukraine the means it needs to defend their homes against this unprovoked invasion, while conducting the most significant military modernization here in the U.S. arguably in 40 years while trying to give Taiwan what it needs to prevent a conflict that would transform the globe. All at the same time. Right?

LEWIS: I could not agree more.

BOWMAN: And so, I think, one silver lining of the horrific things that we're seeing Ukraine, I think, pushback, if you disagree, is that it exposed for everyone to see some longstanding, kind of under the surface problems in our defense industrial base, where, like for munitions, for example, we just don't have the production capacity we need on munitions. And when we do our unclassified research here, we find for key munitions, depending on unclassified war games here,

within one to two weeks in the conflict, we're running out of things like the long range antiship missile, which we would need in the conflict.

So, we've been warned. Great people are acting to try to increase that production capacity. It takes time to build the factories, to train the people. Right? And this is where foreign military sales can help, right? Because DoD's demand goes up and down, and the foreign military cells can help fill in those low spots. That provides predictability to industry to keep the people on the assembly. Right? And that all can help. But you mentioned congressional notification and contract, right? Which just kind of comes back more into your world a little bit, right? Correct me if I'm wrong, and this is not a cheap shot at all. I don't want it to be. Just trying to understand the problem.

But, like, one anecdote that we zoomed in on was the Harpoon Coastal Defense Systems for Taiwan. If I were to make a list of two to three weapons I would most want them to have to make PLA planners decide that today is not the day to try to extinguish freedom for 25 million people in Taiwan. I would want them to have the Harpoon Coastal Defense, a mobile system, ground based system, hard to target, exactly what you'd want them to have. With deference to you, according to our research, from going from congressional notification to getting on contract took almost as long as it took to go from the beginning of World War Two to launching the D-Day invasion. Right?

So, getting something on contract, not even bending a single piece of metal, just simply getting the contract signed, took about as long as you went from [the U.S. entering] World War II to launch the D-Day invasion. Now, that's not a cheap shot, but I mean how can we, I mean where is most of the delay, before we ever get to production, where is most of the delay coming? We're not doing cheap shots at Congress, but is it the informal notification? Is it waiting on Congress? Is it the lawyers working through the contracts, is it industry? Where's the delay coming?

LEWIS: Yeah, no, I think these are really good question. Contracting is handled by DoD, not us. So, we don't do the written contracts. And I do know that it can take a year to 18 months to write contracts. I am not, just to be 100% clear, a contracting expert. So, I am not going to opine on what they need to do to speed that up. But I think good, the short answer is I think good people are looking at that question and trying to figure out - are there ways to look at the contracting process and see if there needs to be either more people or different kinds of changes to the system.

I think the -- it depends on different cases where the holdup can be, but I do think we need to take these chunks like look at contracting, look at how we can work with Congress better to make sure they have the information they need when it comes to cases to move things. Recognizing that there are going to be some things in the congressional side that Congress just simply isn't going to agree with. But I think that probably more to come as DoD works through on the contracting side. I would just say, and I'm going to make a plug for civil service here, the people who are working on these things are my team, for example, I can't speak as well on the DoD side but just on the Ukraine work, we've had a 15,000 percent increase in our workload when it comes to presidential drawdown authority.

And understand that the people who are trying to reform these systems are also continuing to do their day job of moving the cases through. And so, an industry is being asked, and we are going to step up to this challenge to dramatically increase the amount of defense exports around the world, reform the system as we're doing it, and get it all right. And we are taking that challenge on. But I do need to be honest. That is a real challenge that anybody would have in any organization.

BOWMAN: What's the main metric you're looking at? Is it just the delivery? When the combat capabilities deliver? From -- what's your start point? When do you start the clock? Is that the main metric? You're looking at how long it takes to deliver the combat capability?

LEWIS: I mean, I think everybody has to look at their piece. So, we look at the piece from when a case gets to us to when we get it out the door. Right? Like in the State Department piece. And I need to note that we're only talking about foreign military sales. The commercial side also, we also look at those numbers, which has a whole - I'm happy to have that conversation, but we have a whole other system over here.

So, we look at those numbers. We also look at the delivery timelines on once the contract is let and the money is paid. And I think the key things to understand about Taiwan, and it's part of why I don't think backlog is exactly the right word is, I'm trying to figure out exactly what the right word is, but none of that is sitting, like, in somebody's inbox somebody somewhere. Right? All of that has been moved out.

BOWMAN: That's post you guys, defense industrial based capacity. When you say back, and that was a point that came up in the hearing.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: It's because we want to be fair and accurate and understand the problem, so we have good solution.

LEWIS: Right. And so, I think, that is also, and we bear a responsibility, too, as government to look at how we can work with the defense industrial base to help them increase their capacity. And sometimes, that is -- you know, it's one thing when you talk about F-16s, which are building really big planes. I just went down to Lockheed -- well, about a month ago, and when you try to increase the number of planes you're building, that's not like you know, increasing the number of shoes you're making, right. You have to physically build space to do that...

BOWMAN: First, second, third tier sub-suppliers, sole source suppliers, all that -- yes.

LEWIS: ... and the sub-suppliers, yes, and you have to have the human resources in the location where you're building the planes who know how to do it. They have to be trained. They have to be trained mechanics.

If things are being made -- and I won't go into the detail of which company this was, but I had a really interesting conversation with one company where the weapon they were building was an older weapon, and it's not all done -- you know, sort of by computers and all these things -- so you had to bring back the people who know how to -- like hand make X, Y and Z part, because to re-engineer that would take even more time.

So, to be fair to our defense industrial base, when you get in the weeds on this stuff, it's not as simple as saying hey, just make more tomorrow.

BOWMAN: And what would make -- correct me if I'm wrong -- well, I know, but I -- I'm being polite, what would make your life easier and what would make the defense industrial base's life easier is if article -- the Article 1 branch, our Congress, would pass its budgets on time and give predictability and fund multiyear procurements, which would incentivize them to make these investments in their production capacity.

Any comment?

LEWIS: I -- I...

BOWMAN: No comment, okay. Okay. That's -- I'll -- I'll own that one. Okay, are you looking at queues, the lines, so say -- so, X countries want Y weapon -- want this weapon system, you've got five people lined up, ooh, here's Taiwan, here's Israel, here's Ukraine...

LEWIS: Right...

BOWMAN: ... down here, shouldn't we move them up to number one or...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... number two. Now, if you're getting someone jumping in front of your line, I can -- as a country I can appreciate how -- how you know, you might not like that, but you know, one of the -- one of the main points is aligning this with our national...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... security strategy, our national defense strategy, so not all country are equal in terms of, I would say, in terms of our desired -- our self-interest in helping them. Are you looking at the queue and jumping people to the head of the line?

LEWIS: You know, I get asked this question a lot, and so just for everybody's awareness, when -- you know, the way the system works is you get your contract, you pay your money and then you're in the line.

So, just to point out a couple of complexities with that, one is that people have contracts, and these are legal documents, and they have paid for a defense article. And sometimes, they've paid for -- the other thing is you know, one country may want one type of -- you know, whatever it is and another country wants a slightly different variant, right.

So, lines aren't just -- it's not as simple as you know...

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: ... making one kind of shoe...

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: ... and so I -- you know, we are always open to ideas and suggestions and things to think about, but jumping the line is much more complicated than it looks at -- at first.

BOWMAN: Understood. Is there a path to doing it though? Because -- given the urgency of what we're seeing...

LEWIS: Yes...

BOWMAN: ... in the Taiwan Strait?

LEWIS: I mean we're -- you know, I think again, we're always willing to take a look at that, but I do think you know, when we have countries that have put down money and have a contract with the United States government or with the -- you know, the defense company, it's more than just...

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: ... a -- oh, you know, we can throw your contract out the window and bump somebody up...

BOWMAN: Yes -- well...

LEWIS: ... so...

BOWMAN: ... yes, I just -- that's a strawman, but...

LEWIS: Yes, sorry.

BOWMAN: Okay, all right.

LEWIS: All right, we will continue to -- to look at these ideas and suggestions...

BOWMAN: Yes, no, that's -- that's great...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... thank you. And then oh boy -- again, the -- given the character of potential conflict in Taiwan that we've been talking about...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... it seems important to me and -- and the growing capability of the PLA frankly, that we have prepositioned stocks in the region already...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... for those not familiar this is the -- literally the pre-positioning of weapons near to the conflict, so that when the shooting starts, our -- our troops can fall on them more quickly...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... Congress included in the FY23 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 5503 Annual Contingency Stockpile Additions and Support... for Taiwan, what's your view on their -- on -- on pre-positioning weapons, both in Taiwan and near Taiwan...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... as a means of deterrence? Are we making progress on that?

LEWIS: Yes, I mean I think -- you know, I this is a really good point. I think -- let me take the sort of on island versus off island...

BOWMAN: Sure.

LEWIS: ... so I think part of what we're trying to do when you look at the increase in foreign military sales, is to literally make sure that they have more on island. And I want to be really clear we are doing that because we believe that is a deterrent. We are doing that, because our goal is to maintain peace and stability in the...

BOWMAN: Of course.

LEWIS: ... Taiwan Strait...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... so, that is the -- the -- the point of having (inaudible)...

BOWMAN: Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act...

LEWIS: Right, exactly, and the...

BOWMAN: Communiques...

LEWIS: ... communiqués...

BOWMAN: ... and the memos...

LEWIS: Exactly.

BOWMAN: ... and longstanding bipartisan U.S. policy...

LEWIS: Exactly. So -- but I do think the idea that they need to have these items on island is mission critical, and that's what we're looking at.

When it comes to prepositioning, I think I have to defer a little bit to my DOD folks...

BOWMAN: Yes...

LEWIS: ... particularly...

BOWMAN: ... yes.

LEWIS: ... because I get mad at them when they make decisions...

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: ... in my space...

BOWMAN: Right...

LEWIS: ... Don't worry I do, but ...

BOWMAN: But this all goes right to FMS to fill those...

LEWIS: Right.

BOWMAN: ... To fill those stockpiles up.

LEWIS: I think -- you know, when we look at building relationships throughout the Indo Pacific, which I do think really serves as you know, connectivity, but also sends a message...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... as well...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... so I think when we have more countries buying more U.S. kit, putting it there in the region, I think that also serves as a deterrent...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... so I think those sales have multiplicities of benefits. One, these are things that countries have told us they need for their own self-defense and their own national security. These are things that I believe supports our national security, but I also think, as you're saying that -- that can create a deterrent message as well.

BOWMAN: Exactly. It signals intent. It signals commitment...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... and as I've said in other -- it's -- this is not 1991 anymore, in terms of -- I would argue, in terms of U.S. capability -- you don't have to comment if you don't want to, I think a lot of Americans not doing this for a living think that the U.S. military can go anywhere we want and take as long as we want, we'll be unchallenged, we'll build up major operating bases and it will not be challenged and then commence military activities when we choose.

Anyone who's looked at the threat from the PLA, those assumptions no longer apply in -- in terms of anti-access area-denial threats, so if you buy everything I just said, then I think that puts a premium on getting weapons pre-positioned already there from the beginning. And if we're going to do that, better make sure they have sufficient air and missile defense, I would say -- I would imagine...

LEWIS: I mean air and missile...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... defense is...

BOWMAN: Yes, yes. Yes...

LEWIS: ... a whole other...

BOWMAN: ... yes...

LEWIS: ... very complicated, but really...

BOWMAN: Exactly.

LEWIS: ... important topic, and I think the...

BOWMAN: Yes, yes.

LEWIS: ... Ukraine war...

BOWMAN: Yes.

LEWIS: ... is an object lesson in air defense...

BOWMAN: Yes. Absolutely.

Let's shift to AUKUS, so AUKUS...

LEWIS: Yes...

BOWMAN: ... the coolest acronym around -- I don't know who thought of that. I don't know if that was a member...

LEWIS: (Inaudible)...

BOWMAN: ... of your team who should get credit for that...

LEWIS: Wasn't me.

BOWMAN: ... in September of 2021, Australia, U.K., U.S. in case you're wondering what AUKUS stands for -- AUKUS established a new partnership designed to promote a free and open Indo Pacific that is secure and stable, right. There's a nice little shorthand...

LEWIS: It is.

BOWMAN: ... of our interests, right...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... and you're right, and a lot of our partners don't want to pick sides between us and China, but 'sign me up for a free, open, inclusive Indo Pacific,' they say right. And so, on March 13th, the leaders of the three countries announced the plans for implementing pillar 1, which seeks to deliver the first sovereign, Australian, conventionally armed...

LEWIS: (Inaudible).

BOWMAN: ... conventionally armed nuclear powered submarine capability. AUKUS pillar 2 focus on the development of all kinds of advanced capabilities, quantum, AI, autonomy, cyber, hypersonics, dot, dot, dot, the list goes on.

You testified about AUKUS on May 24th, the HFAC, the House Foreign Affairs Committee. You highlighted three things you're doing, novel use of existing authorities, series of legislative proposals and shared standards for protecting information.

Talk to me, if you would, about the first one, the novel use of existing authorities. How is your bureau -- how is the administration...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... using the existing authorities in a way to push things ahead faster on AUKUS?

LEWIS: Yes, so first of all, I really appreciate -- he literally -- those are -- those are my talking points...

BOWMAN: I'm trying to save you time...

LEWIS: ... on AUKUS, so,...

BOWMAN: ... I'm trying to save you time. I am going to challenge you, don't worry...

LEWIS: But I -- you know, I -- I do think AUKUS is about a generational challenge that we're taking on. It really is I think, one of the most innovative things that we have done.

And I think it will have really long term benefits, but to get to your -- your question -- so, we're looking at this -- so, our role in pillar 2, which the whole point of pillar 2 is to create innovation on things like AI, hypersonics, these new technologies between the three allies. And to do that, we need defense trade to move quickly, but also effectively and with the right controls.

And so, we're looking at a phased approach. So, step one is we have existing authorities under the existing laws -- I can walk you through them, but you would get bored, but the short version of the story is to start with right now, before any new legislation is passed, we're creating a system that's pretty simple.

It is -- it says, we have to know sort of what's in AUKUS and what's not -- what's an AUKUS program and what's not. We have to know who the end users are who are going to receive them. I think everybody understands why we need to know who's getting these highly -- our most sophisticated technology.

And third, we've create in essence, a blacklist, like what can't move. And those are things like things that are prohibited under non-proliferation laws or other treaties and they vary a little bit country to country depending on what you've signed off on.

And the idea is that once you have that basic rubric, things can move very quickly between the three countries. And so that's the -- the interim plan is even while we're waiting for legislation to pass and all of these things, we have a way for technology to move quickly.

On the second piece, in the -- concurrent with that, we are working on a legislative proposal which I think we're going to be setting with Congress very, very shortly that will have the bigger picture -- legislative plan to allow that trade to move quickly, but in a -- you know, underwritten by law.

BOWMAN: Could you give us a sneak peek on that legislative proposal?

LEWIS: I can't give you a sneak peek...

BOWMAN: Oh, come on, I got reporters in the room, you know they're going to ask you that, I'm...

LEWIS: I wish I could give you...

BOWMAN: ... no sneak peek?

LEWIS: No sneak peek.

BOWMAN: Okay.

LEWIS: Except for that it will serve the -- the underlying purposes of AUKUS, how's that?

BOWMAN: That's -- okay, that's -- that's good.

Okay, the pillar 1, right, getting Australia its own attack submarine, right. You know, I -- I used to work these issues closely when I was working for...

LEWIS: Yes, of course.

BOWMAN: ... Senator Kelly Ayotte [who served] on the Armed Services Committee. A lot of people may not know that America's attack submarine fleet -- the size of it has been declining as Los Angeles class submarines are retiring at a faster rate than we're replacing them with Virginia class submarines.

I remember back in the day, we were working trying to get from one to two and two to three attack submarine productions a year here. There's real challenges in our industrial base to do that...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... now we're going to put it -- you know, I'm -- I'm a -- I'm a big fan that you -- this is...

LEWIS: Right, no, no, no, but this is a...

BOWMAN: ... this is a -- I'm playing devil's advocate here...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: Big fan, AUKUS is great, implementation, rollout, the whole France thing, we can talk about that, but (inaudible) -- but I share the goals -- excellent, but now we're going to put additional demand on our industrial base, do you have any -- and I -- I guess yes, kind of a -- a Pentagon question...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ... but really back in your lane a little bit as well, are you concerned about our defense industrial base being able to deliver on additional demand? We're already struggling to fill our own -- with enough Virginia class submarines?

LEWIS: Look, I think this is a legitimate question, but the people who know more than me, because this really isn't...

BOWMAN: Yes, yes, yes...

LEWIS: ... in my space, tell me that not only are we going to be able to do that, but that this new investment is going to help secure and invigorate that defensive industrial base...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And make investments in our own communities.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And jobs here ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... in ways that I think are both in our national security interest, but also just in the ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... interest of the ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... the people who are who are doing that work. So, they feel very confident that we're going to be able to do this. And I think because we are doing this with Australia, it's you know, we're -- we're joined in this project by a country that shares similar values and interests, and that has the ability to make these kinds of adjustments.

BOWMAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah that's great. And, and I knew it was a good thing when I saw the reaction from Beijing.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: if you have a doubt, if they don't like it, it's probably a good thing. OK. Any -- and probably premature, but I can't resist, any plans, initial thoughts and eventually expanding AUKUS to other countries?

LEWIS: Look, I think people have asked us this question fairly regularly.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: I think at this point, we're really focused on getting AUKUS out the door, which is an enormous project.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And then I think after that, we'll be open to looking at the possibilities there. But I think at this point, we're really just focused on getting it in place. And then we'll look at other opportunities.

BOWMAN: Yeah. That makes total sense. And I'm mindful that, you know, I see Adam Tarsi sitting here in the audience who does who helps lead the Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate, and doing great work U.S.-Israel stuff and the U.S.'s Ops-Tech Working Group, which has the six sub working groups, many of which of them are directly parallel to what AUKUS is doing. So, their bilateral relationships with different countries are different but it seems like there's a lot of synergy developing kind of the Heidi Shyu R&D world that we can -- we can take advantage of.

India.

LEWIS: India.

BOWMAN: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in town.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: You know, fancy dinner at the White House, addressed a joint meeting of Congress. Announced several agreements, adopted defense industrial cooperation roadmap, a Memorandum of Understanding on production of jet engines in India, Master Ship Repair Agreements, U.S.-India Defense Acceleration Ecosystem, thinking of the Quad, announced India's procurement of high-altitude UAVs.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: Anything that you'd want to foot stomp about kind of the defense security cooperation in India?

LEWIS: Yeah. I mean, I think it is really striking how far and how close that relationship really is. And I think, you know, this is also as we talk about defining the 21st century, and I think, and the President said this right, that this relationship is going to be one of the relationships that defines the future of this -- our century that we're living in. And I think, as we look at expanding our defense, trade cooperation, and you just listed a whole host of things that came out of this visit, that we continue to see interest in that growing.

I feel like this is it's not fair to say it's a first step, because there's so much that's gone before it. But I think this is a defining step as we move forward. Because each of these things that you listed there opens doors to other things. And so, you know, we're always going to continue to look for new opportunities. I'm really excited about it.

BOWMAN: That's great. I am too. The -- does India's ongoing relationship with Russia? What kind of challenges does that present for building security cooperation with India?

LEWIS: Look, I think, you know, India obviously speaks for itself on these topics and the, you know, have a long history of relationships with a whole host of countries. I think at this point, I think we're very focused on building this relationship between us and India. And we get that same message back from them.

BOWMAN: Sounds good. OK. You'll -- those people that read our title real closely saw the "Indo-Pacific and Beyond." We snuck that in there so I can hit you on a couple of questions.

LEWIS: Say again, and beyond.

BOWMAN: Yeah. Nefarious former staffers you mentioned that was in there. So here comes the nefarious part.

LEWIS: OK.

BOWMAN: But I think your team maybe gave you a heads up on this. So, Europe, Ukraine.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: I understand you -- I saw your testimony you were in Ukraine.

LEWIS: I was -- yeah.

BOWMAN: So, you visit Ukraine ...

LEWIS: Yeah, I did.

BOWMAN: ... you went to Kyiv I presume? Following Putin -- I don't think we can say enough, unprovoked, large-scale invasion, it's interesting to see Prigozhin's comments about how Putin's whole line was a big sham, that there was no threat from Ukraine and that there was no need to de-nazify. This was completely a sham invasion.

How would you assess the administration's security assistance efforts to Ukraine? What's going well? Where do you -- where do you think we need to improve?

BOWMAN: I mean, I think that our security assistance to Ukraine has truly been extraordinary. But it hasn't just been us. So over 50 countries are working with us on that effort on a daily basis. Let me talk a little bit about ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... what we've done.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And then talk a little bit about what other countries that have done. So at this, you know, the number varies a little bit, but we're at about \$40 billion in security assistance, Ukraine. Most of that has come through the Presidential drawdown authority, which is this authority, Secretary -- one designated to the Secretary of State, by the way.

BOWMAN: From Congress to the ...

LEWIS: To the President, and he delegates it to the Secretary of State. That allows us to take from DOD stocks and provide those immediately to other countries, which avoids the production problem that we were just talking about.

BOWMAN: Quicker delivery.

LEWIS: Because the weapons already exist.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: So, but in addition to that, you've seen the training component, you've seen investments in other areas. So, I think -- and what I would say, having been in Ukraine, and then talk to the men and women who are doing this work, I think there are many untold stories in this, one is the logistics. People in this room, maybe will write books on the logistics that have ...

BOWMAN: Yup, yup.

LEWIS: ... been part of this and the teams of people who have worked to get everything there.

BOWMAN: Yeah. No, absolutely. And, you know, some of our in my opinion, push back however you want to obviously, some of our European allies have been extraordinary in supporting Ukraine, I think of the United Kingdom, I think of Poland, I think of the Baltic countries.

LEWIS: The Baltics, yeah.

BOWMAN: Some, less so. What's your assessment of in the burden sharing context of European stepping up to do more to help Ukraine themselves because they arguably have an even stronger, we have a strong interest, they have an even stronger interest?

LEWIS: I think that's right. I mean, I think if you look at what the Baltic countries have done, it's truly you know, some of them have sent over 50 percent of their own defense budget effectively, and to Ukraine.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And I think, you know, we just saw the Germans here. And they ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... have obviously, and I think part of why they were here was about stepping up in really big ways. If we look at some of the more recent stuff they've provided. I think, if we look at some of the investment that we're seeing from the Europeans across the board, in terms of these, the new defense funds that are being created, and the way they're looking at using them, not just in Ukraine, but to help build the defense industrial base.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: The other thing which I was really struck by my trip, I also went to Romania is what they've done on refugees, which we don't think about, that's not security assistance.

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: But I just, you know, all of those border countries have taken in huge quantities of refugees, who are all women and children. I'm a mother myself, so I got to meet and sit and talk with them. These are all people who don't want to be out of their country and a lot of whom, who tried to go back regularly, because they're supporting like grandparents and things like that, who can't leave.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And countries throughout Europe are also literally, you know, providing housing, schooling ...

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: ... and health care for them, too. So, I think there are other contributions as well as the security is this.

BOWMAN: There's a raging debate here in Washington and, you know, about balancing finite American resources between Ukraine and Taiwan, between the European Command area of responsibility, the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. I've engaged in that debate, Bridge Colby has been active in that debate. He's a friend. We met here a week or two ago.

How do you think about, you know, this is really kind of in the grand strategy realm? How do you think about how we should balance competing priorities and finite resources between Ukraine and Taiwan? How do you think about that?

LEWIS: Excuse me. I mean, I think we have to, and we can do both. And I think we are doing both. I think if you look at the investment in, in Ukraine, which we could talk about, but I believe is not just an investment in stopping an unprovoked -- war that's, you know, taking land one country from another, but also would change the rules of the game for the rest of us and the world.

BOWMAN: Right.

LEWIS: But we are continuing that investment in the Indo-Pacific.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And in really significant ways, not just on my side of the House, but on, you know, in the Pentagon side of the House. And I do think we have to do both because the world doesn't end in one or the other of those places. And again, when we talk about the future of the 21st century, and I really, truly mean this, when I look at my kid, and I say what is who's going to be setting the rules of the game for my children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. I think we want people who believe in democracy, rule of law and transparency and human rights to be those people. And we just, we're going to have to invest on both sides.

And, you know, at this point, we've been able to do that. Obviously, we are always in challenging times. I also continue to believe that investing here, America being stronger is also an incredibly important investment because the stronger we are on all fronts, and the better able we are to deal with the challenges.

So, I mean, I'm not being trite I actually ...

BOWMAN: No, (inaudible) ...

LEWIS: ... think that -- I actually think that is the truth.

BOWMAN: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. No, it's, it's great. And the team flagging me to go to questions. I'm going a little bit long in our discussion as we were a little late starting. You have a hard stop at 1:45. So don't worry, we're going to rest with the questions.

LEWIS: OK.

BOWMAN: That's what your team will throw something at me...

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: ...if I got that wrong here. But that's, that's why I'm going a little long here Because this is so good. But we are going to get to questions in a moment. No, I agree with you for what it's worth that, we know that China and Russia, according our intelligence community and the worldwide threat assessment a couple of years ago are more aligned than they've been since the 1950s. We've seen military exercises between China and Russia, both maritime and land-based exercises. We've seen Beijing repeating Putin's talking points about the Ukraine invasion, providing there's some degree of not necessarily we could talk about dual use. You know, doing unhelpful things vis-a-vis Ukraine.

And so, it's, it's clear that I think that that competitors, or I would call them adversaries around the world are watching to see what happens to Ukraine, and they're going to decide, does America -- is America willing to put its money where its mouth is and that's going to inform decisions they make about trying to use military force to accomplish political objectives, whether it's in the Middle East, on the Korean peninsula, or in the Taiwan Strait.

So, I think Ukraine matters for its own sake, and also matters for what message we send about our will, our capability, and whether we get this right or wrong and have ramifications for generations to come around the world. So, do you want to push back there?

LEWIS: No, I mean I think we are -- I think we're, you know, there are moments that come along for every generation, this has not been our only moment.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: But I truly think we are collectively at those one of those moments about what the world's going to look like in the future. And so, I think I could not feel more committed to the mission of what my Bureau does, but you know, also step back what we're doing on a bipartisan way around the world.

BOWMAN: Well said. OK, last topic, then we go to questions. So, get your questions ready. The "Beyond", the Middle East.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: So, security architecture. Senior, as you know, well, I'm sure your team was involved. I'm sure senior administration delegation went to Saudi Arabia in February to participate in the U.S. Gulf Cooperation Council Working Group.

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: Meetings, focused on integrated air and missile defense, maritime security, Iran and counterterrorism. Our mutual friend, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Dana Stroul --

LEWIS: She's great.

BOWMAN: -- was there, was part of the delegation. She -- we did a roundtable with her, a while back here. She said, quote, "there has been no other moment in time which the prospect for meaningful integration [in the Middle East] is more real than today," because of a, shared assessment between the United States and the Gulf Cooperation countries of the threats that face us."

I think she's right.

LEWIS: Mm-hmm.

BOWMAN: I mentioned your thoughts. Seems to be adversaries. I'll name them Iran. Islamic Republic of Iran, and its terror proxies with like us and our partners as divided, weak and distracted as possible. Conversely, I think it's in our interest to build a security architecture.

Us with our Arab partners, ideally including Israel, to detect threats and respond more effectively. Can you provide any update --

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: -- on the effort to build a secured, more effective security or a security architecture in the Middle East?

LEWIS: Well, first of all, I agree wholeheartedly with Dana, who's my --

BOWMAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEWIS: -- former colleague from the committee and doing -- doing great work at the Department of Defense every single day. And I think like you hit the nail on the head, our Middle East strategy right now really involves strengthening those security partnerships, building that security architecture. Again and I think this goes back to something we talked about before, when we invest in partnerships, when we are not just saying, hey, we're here, but we're saying, how can we work together on these shared problems? I literally think we get better results.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: And I think that's what we're trying to do in the Middle East. And I think you mentioned the Abraham Accords, I think, including building on those Abraham Accords --

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: -- you know, I think, again, you know, one of those ways where we can continue to build on something that's happened over many multiple administrations, many years.

And I think as you know, for example, we recently held the largest ever military exercises with Israel --

BOWMAN: Juniper Oak.

LEWIS: Mm-hmm.

BOWMAN: Yeah, yeah. Aircraft carrier strike group. Yeah.

LEWIS: Right.

BOWMAN: Very important exercise.

LEWIS: Important exercise. And I think then, you know, continuing to build on that progress on the Abraham Accords. And, you know, we have a long history of security cooperation in the Middle East.

But our goals there are, you know, we want stability, we want peace, and that takes investment as well.

BOWMAN: Great. Last question for me, then go into the audience. I talked about China and Russia being more aligned, we also see Iran and Russia more aligned. And we see -- of course, we had the 25-year deal between China and Iran a couple of years back.

We see --

BOWMAN: -- China being more active than ever diplomatically. In the Middle East, we see China, which was like AWOL when it came to arms sales in the Middle East, now starting to increase arms sales, including, frankly, to some of our partners.

How does this kind of growing axis, if you will, a term that Cliff May has used in his columns for a long time between China, Russia, and Iran, inform your thinking about security cooperation in the Middle East?

LEWIS: I mean, here's what I would say. I think -- and this goes back to something that we --

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: -- talked about earlier. I think that ours -- in some ways, our security cooperation speaks for itself. And we have our own goals on the foreign policy side and national security side, when we sell a particular weapon to a country.

In addition to that, I think it deepens and strengthens those ties. And I think, you know, as we talk about China, right, I think we've made it very clear, you know, we're going to cooperate where we can, compete where we must. And I think this -- this falls into the, compete where we must and where we need to.

And so I think I've always believed that arms sales in and of themselves aren't the end goal. They are part of a larger policy.

BOWMAN: Means to an end, right.

LEWIS: They're policy or an operational capability, but they're part of something bigger. And I think -- I continue to believe that when you ask the questions about, you know, China and Russia, obviously, Iran slightly different in terms of the Middle East dynamic.

But I think, you know, part of the way that we deal with that problem is by being invested and involved upfront, you know, at the beginning.

BOWMAN: Right. Sounds good. OK. Let's go to the audience as promised for questions. Please wait for them -- raise your hand. Please wait for the microphone to come to you.

If you would like to stand up, that'd be great. Introduce yourself before asking your questions. So questions. Yeah, we have one right over here.

QUESTION: Hi, and thank you both for doing this. My name is Adam Kozloski, Senator Joni Ernst's office.

My question is going back again in the conversation on the Pacific. And I'll use the example of Taiwan, but on a broader conversation with a lot of time discuss focusing on the negotiation process to production capabilities and some of the facts there.

My question is related to the absorption capacity of countries, you know, obviously, sometimes when weapons just land on foreign shores, that's not the end of the process, it takes time for them to use those capabilities and begin to use those capabilities. That seems to be kind of unreported or un-talked about kind of delay, or how long that can take, which we've heard can take quite some time.

So my question is, how is this being assessed within your bureau? And additionally, how is that related to kind of a threat environment we're seeing?

LEWIS: Related. So sorry. I couldn't hear you.

QUESTION: The threat environment we're seeing. So countries like Taiwan, where there may be a higher threat environment. How does that timeline absorption play in, if at all, in your considerations when you sell arms?

BOWMAN: Great question. Thank you.

LEWIS: Yeah, I mean, it is a really interesting question. I -- I would say one of the interesting things, and one of the reasons that sometimes it can take a little bit more time is, we work very hard with the country upfront to, A) make sure it's something they want. And, B) something that they can sort of to use the word you said, absorb.

So one of the reasons why we have this, what we call the total package approach is a lot of weapons you need to be trained on them. And particularly for things that are more sophisticated, that training can take time.

And so we actually build that whole scenario and -- and really that piece is more done by the Defense Department. We look at it. But for all of that going forward. I actually think in some ways, the most important piece of all this is the maintenance.

So one of the things that we are trying very hard to do, and we do look at this question all around the world, this isn't an Indo-Pacific question and say, are you going to be able to maintain the capabilities that you get one other -- I'll tell a little funny story. I think it's funny, anyway.

When -- when countries are transitioning off Russian or Soviet kit, a lot of this stuff, by the way, is Soviet. And the maintenance for that is very different than the maintenance that you need to do on our more sophisticated, complex weapon systems.

And I once had -- I won't say who it was, but I once had a child say to me, you know, on the Russian Soviet stuff, I can -- 90% of the problems I can fix with a hammer. Like he basically was like, look, I can just hit it here or hit it there. I mean, he was exaggerating.

BOWMAN: Yeah, barely.

LEWIS: But it was -- we were having a conversation about this question. But he said, I know when we -- when your stuff comes in the door, we're going to have to have a core cadre of people who understand how to maintain and sustain it.

And I think that piece is not talked about enough, because we don't want weapons sitting in a warehouse that have fallen apart and can't be used. And maintenance and sustainment, there are probably people in this room who know better than I do, is a big piece of what we do in our own military. That's a big part of readiness is our weapons, not just are our human beings ready to go, but are our weapons in good shape.

So I think that is -- I think that's important everywhere. I think in a context, a higher threat environment, so again, this isn't specific to Taiwan, that only becomes more important.

So it is something that we do actually work through pretty regularly.

BOWMAN: The Assistant Secretary said earlier, you know, these are means to an end, right?

LEWIS: Yes.

BOWMAN: They're not ends in themselves and kind of, don't let me misquote you, but kind of inherent in your question. The idea is that it's all about the combat capability that they deliver to our partner and into the combined force. That's in the end, can it do its mission in combat? That's --

LEWIS: Yeah.

BOWMAN: -- that's where -- that's where you're going to get the deterrence value or not.

And so one other area of research that we've been looking at is when we've had delays in the delivery of weapons to partners. And we looked at the example of KC-46s to Israel, asking that, you know, the good faith constructive question.

What can we be doing now to hasten the day, to scrunch the time between the arrival of Israel's KC-46s --

LEWIS: Right.

BOWMAN: -- and when they could use them in combat operations, right? And we found, and this will be obvious to you, but maybe not obvious to everyone in the room, is that there's absolutely things we can be doing now and then two to four years between when they receive them like, making sure they have the schoolhouse slots training for their pilots, their crew chiefs and their maintainers, are those -- or do we have those reserved?

And then after that's done, hey, why don't we use the Air Force's Military Personnel Exchange Program to embed these Israeli personnel into American KC-46 units, so the maintainers, the crew chiefs, and pilots are operating in real-world operational units getting that experience?

Then hey, why don't we send American KC-46s to, I don't know, the Greek hosted, INIOCHOS exercise, so that Israeli planes can come and practice refueling off our KC-46s and, hey, well, I don't know. Why don't we deploy American KC-46 for two weeks, two months to Israel, so they can climb all over them? So that when there's arrive, belatedly, they're -- they -- it's not three months before they can be used, it's the next day, right?

And so you can take that model, if you buy what I'm saying. You can apply that, I think, in almost every case where you're seeing a delay in delivery. And you want to add or subtract?

LEWIS: No, I just think -- I think if my DOD colleagues were sitting here --

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: -- one of the things that -- and we've seen this as we're looking at that -- that question of, if it's going to take longer for defense article to get delivered, can we sort of run the training concurrent?

Like, if you look at this, you know, sort of in an ideal world that the training completes as the defense article arrives --

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: -- so that you're using that time for good purpose?

BOWMAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. All right. Next. Yes, right here, Tony, please.

QUESTION: Yeah. Tony Capaccio with Bloomberg.

Two quick questions. What legislative authorities on AUKUS, for both Pillar 1 and 2, do you -- do you need at minimum that have not been passed?

And a PDA question.

LEWIS: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Wall Street Journal a little while ago reported that the administration was close to approving ATACMS for Ukraine, that would be a PDA issue. Is that accurate?

BOWMAN: And PDA is not public displays of affection. That is Presidential Drawdown Authority.

LEWIS: Presidential Drawdown Authority.

BOWMAN: So, all right. Yeah.

LEWIS: I get that -- OK. Wait, so the first one is what new authorities do we need?

QUESTION: What do you need here, basically?

LEWIS: So we -- is my mic still on? We have the ability to move forward. As I said before, with this interim plan. On the new authorities, I need to be careful to not get ahead of the fact that we haven't shared the legislative plan yet with the Hill. And so I'm not going to comment on the details of the new authorities we need in any specifics.

What I would say is, what we're going to try to do is have a legislative proposal that smooths out all of the trade, that allows us to move more effectively and more quickly.

On the second question. I don't know whether ATACMS would be a PDA issue or just a policy decision. But I don't have any new updates on any decisions on ATACMS.

QUESTION: But if there was close to -- if you recall that the administration was close to approve -- if the administration was close to approving ATACMS for Ukraine, you would know that though, when you're in the interagency process?

LEWIS: I mean, I -- it depends, I guess I was what I would say.

QUESTION: OK, thanks.

BOWMAN: So ATACMS just for those, these Army Tactical Missile System. This is a missile system that is in the U.S. inventory that we have lots of, that has a longer range than what we've provided Ukraine in the past that would allow the Ukrainians to hit targets deeper inside Ukraine against invading Russian forces.

And this is a -- a -- I think is both a policy decision and a presidential drawdown -- that could be provided via presidential drawdown authority tomorrow. Literally could be in Ukraine in -- in three to five days if the administration made that decision, and they have not, and the reasons they have not -- we've heard a variety of reasons, which we could discuss later.

OK, yes, right here?

QUESTION: Hi. Jennifer Hansler with CNN. Thank you for doing this.

On another PDA question, there were some reports about a \$500 million PDA for Taiwan that was under consideration. Can you give us any updates for timing on that, possible capabilities, and if there is any impact on -- the high level travel we've seen from U.S. officials to China, if that's impacting timing at all so as not to provoke Beijing?

And then on Ukraine, one thing they've been asking for is cluster munitions. Has there been any movement on the administration's thinking about providing those? Thanks.

LEWIS: Yeah, I'm -- I don't have any updates on cluster munitions. I'm obviously tracking it closely and I'm sure you're aware of the debate.

On PDA, I think, at the Secretary's hearing maybe a month ago, he previewed that we are looking at this new PDA authority. We got about -- not about, we got \$1 billion in PDA authority in defense auth, I think it was. I can't remember. Well, we got it -- or maybe one of the supplementals.

I don't have anything to preview on specifics or timing but we are looking at doing that, and I -- I would expect it to move forward relatively soon.

BOWMAN: And just to tie all of this together for anyone interested in this, is -- you know, we've been talking about delays in getting arms to Taiwan, right? Presidential drawdown authority, as -- as you said earlier, that we've used in Ukraine to literally, in some cases, have weapons in Ukraine three to four days after it was announced, an incredible logistical feat that the administration deserves credit for.

We -- they -- the administration now has authority to use that same authority to get weapons from American military inventory to Taiwan. So it -- you know, and -- in -- on May 16th, Secretary Austin said that we have that authority and that we plan to use it.

And then the question is is \$1 billion enough? I would say it's not, but anyway -- yeah -- yeah.

LEWIS: And just to note, in addition to the \$1 billion in presidential drawdown authority in the defense auth bill, there was also \$2 billion in -- authorized for FMF. And so we'll see if there are going to be appropriations on that side. That's a congressional question, as well, but just -- as you look at the question of Taiwan, that is, I think, the other authority that we'll see if Congress decides to appropriate those funds.

BOWMAN: Exactly. So we've been talking about foreign military sales process, FMF, foreign military financing, American money to Taiwan for them to buy American weapons. We get all the benefits with our industrial base, we help shape what they're buying to increase the deterrence so we don't see the aggression in the Taiwan Strait.

LEWIS: And we do use FMF all around the world, by the way, not -- it's not Taiwan specific.

BOWMAN: Exactly -- Israel, Egypt, many -- many other countries.

Yes, other questions? Yeah, right here, Reuters.

QUESTION: Hi. Yeah, thanks. Michael Martina with Reuters. Appreciate this.

I wanted to ask about joint production with Taiwan of armaments. There's been some noise about this. I'm wondering if this is pie in the sky or if these are realistic discussions? And if there are realistic -- ongoing discussions, what types of platforms or capabilities are we talking about that are -- you know, that are -- that are feasible or -- a priority?

And on the stockpiles issues you mentioned, I believe Taiwan's Defense Ministry has confirmed those talks are underway. Could you talk a little bit about -- about the obstacles? Is this a political will issue, i.e., you know, the U.S. government or Taiwan is -- doesn't want to antagonize China or is this about building the proper fortified storage places and -- and that kind of logistical stuff that's preventing this from going forward quickly?

LEWIS: Great. Can you remind me of your first question again now? I was thinking about the second one.

QUESTION: Joint production with ...

LEWIS: Ah, joint production. Right, OK. Look, I think that, when it comes to the question of joint production on Taiwan, I don't have any specifics to share today. I think what I can tell you is that, for -- as we look at any country and -- so a country like Ukraine or a country like, you know -- pick a country around the world, the question of whether they can co-produce is something that literally the State Department is not allowed to negotiate things like offsets and co-productions agreements.

So I have to stay in a -- at a very sort of clear lane on that space -- that's not specific to Taiwan -- because those end up ultimately being negotiated by companies. Companies have to make their own economic decisions and say "hey, it's in my interest to, you know, have a production line in, I don't know, pick a country."

And so I have to be thoughtful and careful as I respond to the -- to the question.

BOWMAN: But wouldn't your bureau have -- and I'm asking because I don't know -- but wouldn't your bureau have some decision to make in terms of, ooh, that's a very sensitive technology, we don't want that being produced in X or Y place?

LEWIS: Of course. We always have -- there -- in any -- anywhere around the world -- so -- but that's different than us developing the -- going to a company and saying "you -- you need to co-produce X in location Y." So I -- I'm not trying to avoid the question but I am trying to be thoughtful about how I answer it.

So what I would say -- again, to take it out of the Taiwan context, any time there are discussions going on like that with industry or with -- you know, around the world, we do have to look at questions like tech transfer, we always have to look at questions like -- we have to let Congress know if there are things called offsets, like, you know, what a company is providing to support those kinds of things, we have to evaluate it, but I can't comment on -- specifically on whether, you know, we should be doing X or Y in general, not just in this context.

BOWMAN: ... and then your second part was on stock -- the stockpile in Taiwan.

QUESTION: (Inaudible).

LEWIS: I think at this point -- I -- you know, I don't want to get ahead of any conversations that are -- that are happening but I do think -- like, as we talked about earlier, I think you always have to look at all of the different considerations, whether it's, you know, what's available, where things can be stored. All of those kinds of questions are always going to be on the table in any kind of conversation like that.

BOWMAN: And just a five minute rewind on the cluster munitions, Ukraine issue, anyone tracking that, my colleague John Hardie recently wrote a -- a great article here at FDD on that if you're interested.

OK, other questions? Right here.

QUESTION: Hi. It's Ellen Knickmeyer with the Associated Press.

Some of the partners that are complaining the most about it taking too long and there being too many obstacles to get U.S. weapons are also doing significant outreach with China's and Russia's military and defense firms.

Has -- how -- especially as --, you know, you're working to streamline the process of providing arms, how -- are -- are the -- is there a risk that those -- and the -- is the risk that there'll be more exposure of U.S. sensitive technology get -- give China and Russia more opportunity to -- you know, to learn things that they shouldn't learn? Is -- that a disqualifying -- will those -- will outreach with Chinese and Russian militaries or defense firms, will that be a disqualifying factor for some arms sales? Yeah, thank you.

BOWMAN: Yeah.

LEWIS: So I think it's a -- a really good question. Actually, I think it goes to what you were talking about. We always have to look at that question any time that we're providing a weapon or a new capability to a particular country or to a particular region.

We always have to look at the question of, you know, could it be -- you know, are they going to protect the -- literally, like, the weapon itself? Do they have the right mechanisms in place to protect it? Is there a possibility for something to get stolen because of -- not literally the weapon but sort of the IP behind that?

So all of that is literally baked in to our decision-making process already. DOD actually has a significant role to play on that question, to do sort of a deep-dive analysis. So I think that is something that we do every day, and of course, if countries have relationships -- and I -- I didn't mean to be clear. It's not if countries have relationships; if there are specific issues within a country, if, you know, we had information that their -- you know, their intelligence system was infiltrated or something like that that would be related to their ability to get that, you know, just -- to take the technology

or to exploit it. But that isn't new. That is going on. We literally have to do that evaluation for every single thing that we are looking at exporting. That's one of our core responsibilities.

So while certainly China and Russia are always continuing to look for those opportunities, I feel like that's something that we have had to own and do for -- for many, many, many years, and it's going to continue to be a -- a mission-critical part of our job.

BOWMAN: We're coming to the end of our time. Are there any last questions before we run out of time? Any -- we've got one last one over here, and then we'll wrap it up.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is Hosein Ghazanfari from the VOA Persian.

So just have a quick question. U.S. sanctioned to Chinese network or more than two -- I mean, on two occasions. Sanctioned Chinese networks because of their cooperation with Iranian drones program. I just wanted to know if those sanctions have had any impact on the delivery of the Iranian drones to Russia for use within Ukraine.

LEWIS: It is a really good question. This is a -- slightly out of my area of expertise, so let me do my best to answer it. I mean, I know that the purpose of those sanctions was to do exactly what you described, to make sure that we are deterring any ongoing transfer of technology or any of the components of Iranian drones to the Russians and anybody who is sort of assisting them in that process.

I know the teams that are working hard on this are analyzing the impact that it had, but -- and whether, you know, there are any -- anything additional we need to do. But I'm just not privy to those details in -- in my current job.

BOWMAN: That's a great question, and -- and we know that -- that the Iranians have provided the Shahed 131/136 drones to Russia that Russia's used to kill Ukrainian men, women and children in their homes. We know that Iranians have been in parts of Ukraine, perhaps Crimea, helping to train them. They're learning lessons, unfortunately, that they're going to apply in the Middle East to conduct attacks against our troops and our partners. So this is -- this is something that -- it's just another example of how these issues cross regions and another example of our adversaries working more closely together, emphasizing, I think, the importance of us working with our allies and partners, as well. So...

LEWIS: Well no, I 100% agree..

BOWMAN: Absolutely. So any last comments that you'd like to make? Thank you.

LEWIS: Just one thing. Well, first of all, I really want to say thank you. I think, you know, we are all -- all of our thinking is enriched by the work that you do here at FDD. I think having the opportunity to come and talk to you, to hear what you're thinking about, to -- to take questions is really important to the work that we do.

I also think that as we look at this moment, I truly believe we're -- I've been -- the word I've been using is that we are at a moment of tectonic change when it comes to security assistance; that the scope, the scale and the speed of what we are doing now is unprecedented, and that as we do this incredibly hard work in the service of these fundamental goals of democracy, of peace and stability, of our national security, we have to get it right.

And I think the message that you're hearing from us is we are taking on that challenge. We are reforming the process as we do it, and we really look forward to continuing to work with you and -- and not just you, but many others in thinking through how we -- how we can do this successfully.

So -- so thank you and thank you to everybody here.

BOWMAN: Well, thank you for spending time with us.

LEWIS: Thanks.

BOWMAN: Thank you for all your service, sincerely, to our country, what you continue to do. We're safer because of what you and your team are doing and -- and your success is our success, so let us know how we can help you and your team. I mean that sincerely.

LEWIS: Thank you so much, Brad.

BOWMAN: And thanks to the -- those of you who joined us in person. Thanks to you who joined online. If you're not already receiving updates from FDD, please visit [FDD.org](https://www.fdd.org) to subscribe to our work. Thank you very much. Take care.

LEWIS: Thanks so much.